

Module #4: Self-Care

Developing and Implementing a Self-Care/Wellness Plan

In a trauma-sensitive school, all staff are encouraged to have a wellness or self-care plan. As stated in the assigned reading for this module, taking time for self-care is taking time to “sharpen our saw,” so that we can continue to effectively work and avoid the debilitating effects of compassion fatigue.

Step 1

Individuals complete and score the Professional Quality of Life Measures (ProQOL) and complete a self-reflection on the warning signs of compassion fatigue. Each staff member is able to assess her/his own compassion satisfaction level using ProQOL 5 Self-Score (English), which can be found at www.proqol.org. The scoring guide is provided on the second page of the assessment. Further information regarding the validity and the reliability of the scores is available on the website under the FAQ section and in the ProQOL Concise Manual, 2nd Edition (November 2010). The manual is available as a PDF download under ProQOL Measure & Tools.

Step 2

Choose a self-care/wellness plan template. A sample has been provided in this module. You can find a variety of choices by completing a Google search. Finally, templates can be created or modified within your school team based on identified needs. All plans should include goals, activities, and progress monitoring activities.

Step 3

Develop measurable goals that are tailored to your specific self-care/wellness needs. Utilize the compassion satisfaction scoring on the ProQOL along with a self-reflection on the warning signs of compassion fatigue to determine areas of need.

Step 4

Choose or design activities that address each goal. A short list of possible activities is included below. The action part of the plan should include a description of how the activities will be implemented. A team or individual might start a walking club, or decide to further explore the impact of trauma on their wellbeing. In either case, the plan would include the action steps to transform the individual's vision into reality. If a team is interested in assisting their staff with this portion of the plan, an excellent resource is Francoise Mathieu's book, *The Compassion Fatigue Workbook*. More information is available at the end of the on-line training that is part of this module.

Step 5

Monitor your progress and make any warranted revisions. This section of the plan includes the timeline for reflection and check-ins to determine if there is a need for revision. For example, if the goals and activities are focused on physical health, the progress monitoring checks might include a log of hours slept, exercise minutes completed, or completion of a food journal. If progress is not measurable or new barriers are identified, the wellness plan can be modified or revised at the time of a check-in.

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Suggested Activities

Area of Focus	Activities provided by school for staff	Individual Activities
Physical Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Walking/running/exercising groups or clubs ● Free passes for fitness center – availability of exercise equipment in the building ● Yoga/Pilates/aerobics after school ● Relaxation sessions ● Standing desks ● Healthy lunch/breakfast options ● Mini-healthy cooking lessons ● Weight Watchers offered at the building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Participate in physical exercises – groups, clubs, or independently ● Identify relaxation techniques that are helpful and schedule them into your day ● Take breaks from sitting or standing or your environment several times a day ● Monitor food and liquid intake ● Identify better food choices and track them ● Prepare for restful sleep with relaxation, time off from work before sleep, and minimizing stimulations ● Join Weight Watchers
Psychological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Create options for staff to receive free services such as massage, tickets to professional sports, plays, movies or their personal choice activity ● Provide ongoing training and resources in the area of trauma-sensitive schools ● Celebrate successes within the school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Participate in relaxing activities based on personal preference ● Analyze balance between work and play activities by time and emotional energy input – Identify changes to create more balance ● Identify areas of needed skill development, including assertiveness training, stress reduction, interpersonal communication, cognitive restructuring, and time management
Emotional/Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recognize staff and demonstrate appreciation for what they have done in a manner that is comfortable for individual staff ● Provide mentors/partners for processing and support ● Create options for whole-staff gatherings for entertainment ● Daily/weekly check-ins with staff ● Identify individual “back up” staff for challenging situations to allow relief ● Periodically share information with staff about assistance programs ● Facilitate staff discussion and creation of time and personal boundaries with staff and students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify supportive people and identify intentional ways of connecting with those people ● Utilize journaling as a way of processing challenging situations ● Identify boundaries – time, personal, and with students ● Seek professional help when needed ● Utilize gratitude journaling ● Identify and remember the joys and achievements of work ● Set realistic goals
Intellectual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Utilize team times/professional learning communities to problem solve and create plans for students impacted by trauma ● Allow staff to attend workshops with a peer to build the relationship and bring home information for all staff ● Utilize staff meetings for meaningful learning and sharing – Disseminate information via email rather than using meeting time for this purpose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Participate in training related to the challenges at work ● Request and seek out resources to support your work

This is a limited list of suggested self-care activities. Each individual, school team, or school staff will add their own ideas and variations to these suggestions to meet their respective needs and situations.